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ABSTRACT

The Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) is an Aboriginal-controlled language resource center and adult education center serving the Aboriginal communities of central Australia. Its activities include education programs, which range from literacy and numeracy to vocational and tertiary-level courses; an Aboriginal language and culture center specializing in language, cross-cultural, and cultural maintenance programs, as well as providing interpreter services and language research; and a publishing arm, which produces material on the Aboriginal people, language, and culture of central Australia. IAD aims to be an Indigenous university recognized and funded as a mainstream postsecondary organization. Toward this end, IAD has partnered with La Trobe University to develop university-level courses. The Federation of Independent Aboriginal Education Providers, of which IAD is a member, has proposed the creation of an Indigenous-controlled multi-campus university in Australia and the joining with other Indigenous peoples around the world to develop a genuine anti- and post-colonial education system. IAD believes that empowerment of Aboriginal people will come through land rights, education, and health. Accessing ancestral lands maintains spiritual and cultural links and encourages taking care of them. Education gives people the skills and knowledge to maintain the land, and health awareness incorporated into curricula improves the quality of life. Language maintenance is a priority toward achieving these ends and is incorporated into the curriculum. (TD)

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Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program

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PRESENTERS: Ms Donna Ah Chee
Ms Debra Maidment
Ms Margie Hayes-Hampton

Good morning everyone, before I begin, I would like as is our custom throughout Aboriginal Australia firstly to convey my respects, to the survivors and descendants of the original owners of the land on which this Conference is being held.

My name is Donna Ah Chee and I'm the Director of the Institute for Aboriginal Development, more commonly known as IAD in our part of the world. My grandmother is from the Bundjalung nation located on the far north coast of New South Wales. I have been living in Alice Springs for the 9 years after marrying local Arrernte/Luritja man. I would also like to introduce Debra Maidment, IAD's Deputy Director and Margie Hayes-Hampton who today is representing IAD's Language and Culture centre and is also the Co-ordinator of our Aboriginal Culture Awareness Program. Both these ladies grandmothers are from the Arrernte nation of Central Australia

Also joining us today in the audience is Heather Brown, Branch Manager Education and Training Department of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, an Aboriginal controlled health service. Heather is also an IAD Board member.

The 3 areas that we will cover in our presentation to you today on the Institute for Aboriginal Development are:

1. Strategic Directions of the organisation

2. Educational programs with a particular emphasis on curriculum development
3. Incorporation of language and culture into our programs

It would probably be good at this point to show you where Alice Springs is. (overhead)

1. BACKGROUND

The Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) was established by the Uniting Church in Australia in 1969 to assist community development for Aboriginal people and provide cross-cultural education between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal society.

It is now an Aboriginal controlled language resource centre and adult education centre serving the Aboriginal community of Central Australia. Its activities include: education programs, which range from literacy and numeracy to vocational and tertiary level courses: an Aboriginal language and culture centre specialising in language, cross culture and cultural maintenance programs, as well as providing interpreter services and language research; and a publishing arm, IAD Press, which produces material on the Aboriginal people, language and culture of Central Australia. Just to name a few courses that we run:

Certificate in Vocational Studies
Certificate in Occupational Studies
Certificate in Vocational Studies (Aboriginal Organisations)
Certificate in
Associate Diploma in Business (Aboriginal Organisations Management)
Bachelor of Education
Bachelor of Business/Management
Bachelor of Arts (developing)

2. THE AIMS OF THE INSTITUTE

To assist Aboriginal people to develop the knowledge and skills required to cope with cross cultural situations.

To devise and carry out educational and other programs related to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people.

To promote cross-cultural understanding through specific programs to include non - Aboriginal people.

To maximise involvement by Aboriginal people in the control, management and conduct of affairs of the Institute.

To promote the research and understanding of Central Australian Aboriginal languages.

IAD has extensive experience in responding to training needs, with specialist trainers on staff, strong networks with other community based organisations and an organisational infrastructure to effectively promote self determination and self management.

3. IAD PHILOSOPHY

IAD's Philosophy is to provide a safe environment for Aboriginal people to learn in. We promote two way education where teachers learn from students and vice versa. Students prior knowledge and skills are appreciated and respected, students are encouraged to share their skills and knowledge with others.

Culture, language and the role of elders is recognised as the centre from which IAD's education practice is built. The Institute's education empowers and develops the whole person and their community, strengthening family, culture, language, our economic situation and promotes the Aboriginal world view.

The Institute empowers Aboriginal people, to be strong in identity and language, and introduces in a culturally appropriate way tools used in the wester society.

4. THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF IAD (Donna)

In 1994 IAD produced its Strategic Plan to the Year 2000. (Overhead).

Vision: The Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) will be an indigenous university by 1st January 2000, independently controlled by and for Aboriginal people. It will achieve self-determination through culturally appropriate education.

The independent Indigenous campus model represents a situation in which the Institute is declared to be an indigenous University (or college) in its own right under relevant legislation and funded as a mainstream post-school organisation. If established on a similar basis to other universities, this would guarantee a high degree of autonomy in matters of governance, a streamlined and more stable funding base and a clear charter to serve Aboriginal needs as defined in its enabling act. However, given current views on desirable sizes for universities and a range of factors including staff qualification, spread of disciplines and graduation percentages in minimum time, it is most unlikely that the Northern Territory government could be persuaded to enact the legislation or the Commonwealth persuaded to fund it in a mainstream fashion. Although

the validity of the criteria used could be questioned in the context of the Institute as an Aboriginal organisation, it is almost certainly the case that post-school education advisers to governments would recommend that status be granted only after substantial growth and development as a sponsored Indigenous campus of another University.

In 1995 we successfully negotiated a partnership with La Trobe University. A formal agreement between both parties was signed in August 1995. IAD and La Trobe University entered into this agreement with the purpose of assisting IAD to develop a number of university level courses as part of IAD's mission as an Aboriginal controlled educational institution.

IAD's sees this partnership as a stepping stone to achieving its vision.

In more recent times an Australian Indigenous People's University has been discussed more frequently by the Federation of Independent Aboriginal Education Providers. The Federation is made up of 4 other indigenous community controlled education providers located across the country.

The model we propose will have autonomous campuses with their council drawn from the local Aboriginal community and its organisations. **We do not intend to give up our grass roots focus and will continue to do our basic programs which build on empowerment and community development.** An Indigenous People's University is one in which Aboriginal law, languages and culture are the centrepiece and are truly recognised as higher learning.

The Federation formed through the coming together over recent years of five independent Aboriginal community controlled education bodies, who between them have over 150 years of experience delivering education programs to our people. Long before indigenous education became a matter for public policy debate and national funding programs, we were established on the initiatives of people from our own communities and non-Aboriginal supporters who saw that education was key to our self-determination. IAD is one of the five members.

The two long term strategic goals of the Federation are to:

1. become the first indigenous controlled multi campus university in Australia.

What we are talking about is not a university for Aborigines, but an Aboriginal university. We want this to be achieved in such a way that we preserve our distinct identity, and we keep doing all the things we always have.

2. Join in partnership and solidarity with other indigenous peoples around the world and in the first instance the Asia Pacific. Through Asia Pacific BAE and other forums, we want to make links with all other educators who are working in the Pacific and Asia to develop a genuine anti-colonial and post colonial education system. For two hundred and more years, the original peoples of our part of the world have had to live under the yoke of colonialism and its hangovers. We will not achieve real independence, real self determination, until all the last remnants of this colonial period have been overcome. We are still decades away from our objectives, but we can work together to make the 21st century a genuine new era, one in which all the peoples of this region will enjoy those rights promised in the UN covenants.

5. LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS OF IAD (Margie)

I am Arrernte woman born in Alice Springs Central Australia.
Married with three children.
For the past 19 years I has been working for Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs, Sydney and Canberra.
I am currently the Co-ordinator of the Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program at the Institute for Aboriginal Development. I have been in this position for three years. As well as being the co-ordinator, I also facilitate workshops . This is great for me as I get to teach about my people and our culture, it also gives me the opportunity to work with the Elders and learn more about our Cultures.
I see Aboriginal Culture Awareness Program as a much need service, helping over come the barriers that exist between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people.

The Language and Culture Centre is 'the heart of IAD'. It recognises and promotes the values and traditions of indigenous Central Australians and is the point within IAD where indigenous peoples are acknowledged as leaders.

5.1 Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program

The aim of this program is to break down barriers between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. Acknowledging Aboriginal cultures and histories is important to understanding and living within the present. Better communications between two cultures means greater understanding of each other. Bringing about positive change in attitudes makes living and working together possible, and will result in reconciliation.

5.2 Languages In Schools

This program brings young Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together and teaching them language and culture. This gives them better attitudes to each other and encourages living together in harmony.

5.3 Language Courses

This program enable students to learn to speak, read and write language and understand culture. This assists better communication between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in many aspects of living in Central Australia. Different levels of studying languages are offered. Studying Central Australian indigenous languages acknowledges these languages as a valid Australian language.

5.4 Interpreting and Translating Service

This service ensures that Aboriginal people can access services and opportunities without being disadvantaged because they speak their own language as their first language. Language and culture is kept strong and is not compromised in the interest of access to services and opportunities. This service recognises the language skills of indigenous language speakers and provides employment for them.

Interpreting and translating is done in a variety of Languages, such as Central/Eastern/Western Arrernte, Warlpiri, Pintubi/Luritja, Pitjantjatjara, Alyawarra, Anmatyerre, and Kaytetye. These services are provided to Government departments and the public.

5.5 Interpreter Training

Indigenous language speakers are trained and awarded accredited qualifications within a nationally recognised system. This opens up employment opportunities for indigenous language speakers.
In 1979 materials and Curriculum for Interpreter Training was done in this year. Training began in the mid 1980's.

5.6 National Network of Aboriginal Language Translators

This is a register for indigenous language speakers and centres throughout Australia. It is an important network in the maintenance of language and culture of indigenous Australians.

5.7 Aboriginal Languages Dictionary Program

This is a very important part of the storage, revival and maintenance of Central Australian indigenous languages. The publications resulting from dictionary research ensures the continuation of Central Australian indigenous languages and cultures for future generations of indigenous peoples.

Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English dictionary ,
first edition published in 1987 second edition in 1992 then there was a revised edition in 1996

Pintupi/Luritja Dictionary
the first addition published in 1974 and the second 1977 and the most recent in 1992

Alyawarr to English Dictionary
published in 1992

A Learner's Wordlist of Pertame
this was compiled by two Pertame women C. Swan and M Cousens and Published in 1993

Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary
Published in 1994 V. Dobson and J Henderson

Today the Dictionary program is working on two projects and they are Western Anmatyerr , Kaytetye and a revised second edition of the Pitjantjatjara/Yankurytjatjara dictionary.
We have a linguist and Aboriginal People working on these projects.

6. EDUCATION/TRAINING (Debra)
(Deb to do an introductory on herself).

Hello, my name is Debra Maidment I am an Arrernte woman of Central Australia. My position at the Institute for Aboriginal Development is A/Deputy Director. I have worked in Aboriginal education for seven years through coordinating training programs, coordinating curriculum development and managing the educational department at IAD.

The information I will be presenting today will be IAD's perception of Education and the issues that effect us and the solutions to these issues.

We acknowledge that indigenous people are called Aboriginals but in this paper the term Aboriginal refers to the indigenous people of Central Australian.

It has been shown throughout education history that whoever holds the decision making power to choose what will be implemented into curriculum holds the key to what people will learn in mainstream society and whether people like to acknowledge this or not is a fact that what our children learn in school is reinforced through curriculum which is dictated

by mainstream society. Very rarely in my experience as an educator or parent does Aboriginal input go into this process.

This is also obvious in Government policy which affects education institutions who are forced to implement either through their curriculum or through policies which manage their organisations. I believe Curriculum development is the tool for empowerment. For too long IAD has been dictated to by Government to change its courses into models that complies with the mainstream system. This is not always appropriate for Aboriginal people. However, IAD customises models so that they are flexible to meet the needs of Aboriginal people. For example when the Australian Government introduced the National Training Reform Agenda, the outcomes were too complex for students who did not have any literacy and numeracy skills, and had a very slight chance coming out competent after completing an Australian Standards Framework (ASF) Level 1 course.

When IAD introduced the NTRA (National Training Reform Agenda) framework we had to come up with programs for students who did not fit on the first rung of the ASF 1 level. As a result, we introduced a course called the Certificate in Vocational Access which concentrated on building literacy, numeracy and personal skills. This course was like a preparation course for Vocational, Education & Training.

It is for these reasons that IAD needs to implement its own framework, a framework that will be appropriate for our clients;

- that will empower Aboriginal people
- that will appreciate and respect the skills and knowledge that Aboriginal people bring to IAD ,
- that will give them self-esteem and skills,
- that will improve their quality of life through educating them on a number of issues including health,
- to give Aboriginal people the skills and knowledge to be able to attain and retain employment,

This framework will also emphasise that there is an Aboriginal industry, for example the Aboriginal Organisations. At present this industry is not recognised by the Vocational Education and Training system, and this is where the majority of our clients will be employed. This framework will also emphasise to other industries employing an IAD student who is competent in speaking, reading and writing in their own language is more valuable when dealing with clients of the same language group than a competent secretary who does not speak the language of the main clients.

To achieve this there needs to be research done on the process of implementation The research needs to investigate if such a framework meets the needs of the main clientele. It will also look at current issues in curriculum development. IAD sees that it is important to take into

consideration different peoples lives, their values and their beliefs. Another important point for consideration when developing curriculum is the way in which people are conditioned as this does effect peoples learning if the above points are not considered when developing curriculum.

Empowerment is the concept and not using a paternalistic approach to self determination but to build and extend the skills and knowledge people already have.

IAD CASE STUDY:

The case study I will use in my presentation will be the Institute for Aboriginal Development. As mentioned earlier, the Institute for Aboriginal Development has been operating and delivering non-accredited and accredited training programs since 1969.

The main function of the Institute during this time was to provide a welfare service and home makers training and accommodation to Aboriginal people of remote area communities. Those people were transient visitors who usually came into town because their children and family were admitted to the Alice Springs Hospital.

During the time that the Aboriginal transient visitors were in Alice Springs the Institute for Aboriginal Development would provide art & craft courses and nutritional education services. During this time IAD also offered basic literacy and numeracy courses.

From the 1960's to the 1990's the thinking behind curriculum development has changed. The Institute's main objective is to empower Aboriginal people, improve their quality of life, build on students own knowledge and skills to improve their chances of access to western systems, employment and education. This will be achieved through students recognition and belief in their own identity. By educating students on issues of institutional racism as it happens in the school and why Aboriginal people fail in mainstream education Also looking critically at the effects of social powerlessness and how this affects education and employment outcomes.

The main reasons for this method would be for students to understand Aboriginal history and how this has effected them as individuals and their families and how this has effected their lives today. This would also clarify to Aboriginal people why the majority of Aboriginal people were and still are failing in mainstream education. 'Without appropriate education and training, employment is less likely. Without employment people will suffer from poverty. Aboriginal families health are affected.

LAND RIGHTS:

The only solution is Land Rights: Ownership of land maintaining cultural, values and beliefs pertaining to traditional lands. Empower Aboriginal people to maintain their lands through education and training. Through this process people learn how to use the mainstream system giving them access to knowledge and information that they may not already be aware of and developing the confidence to deal with this system. I believe their is a three pronged belief that will empower Aboriginal people and this should be implemented in curriculum. That is Land/Education/Health. (Aboriginal health policy) (Reconciliation) My belief is that you cannot separate the three. They go hand in hand. Aboriginal people accessing their own land that has strong spiritual and family connections people feel good about themselves. Being on the land which maintains spiritual and cultural links with your grandfather/grandmother makes you appreciate what you have got and you will strive to look after it and develop it.

Education and Training will empower people by giving them the skills and knowledge to maintain the land, by building self esteem and improve their quality of life give them confidence to access mainstream systems for funds to develop land. Health awareness should be implemented into education and training courses eg: kidney, heart and diabetes diseases. Through this type of education you will be empowering people and they will be improving their quality of life.

Finally, the second part of this presentation will cover how the Institute for Aboriginal Development will address these issues in Education and training through curriculum development and how curriculum can be a powerful tool to empower people. Mainstream education institutions have been doing this since education first began in Australia. Aboriginal peoples needs have never been considered and added into the curriculum. This is due to the fact that Aboriginal people are not or are the minority of the decision making authorities of what is being taught in mainstream education. Even now in the 1990's the Northern Territory Education Department does not have an Aboriginal studies curriculum and Aboriginal languages are not recognised as a core language area.

To achieve this IAD would have to recognise the diverse Aboriginal clients we service from the Central Australian region. (map) There are different language and cultural groups. There are Aboriginal people who are strong in their Aboriginality that have no language. There are Aboriginal people who speak in their mother tongue but are not able to write in their mothers tongue.

Therefore, any proposed framework would have to take into consideration all of the above factors. The Institute sees language maintenance as a priority and recognises that it needs to be implemented in curriculum and

policies. The second part of the framework would need to address the issue of language. All Aboriginal people should be encouraged and have the opportunity to learn the language of their people. Through this process we will be dealing with the issues of language maintenance and be able to heal the wounds of assimilation and address the destruction of Aboriginal history culture, customs etc.

The process IAD will have to follow will be to talk to the clients:

> Address the needs of language speakers who do not know how to write in their own language.

This could be done by introducing a language framework that will meet the diverse language groups we service. In order to do this consultation will have to done with all stakeholders; elders, clients, accreditation authority.

Conclusion

In concluding, we believe IAD is unique in providing appropriate education for Aboriginal adults in Central Australia with strategic aims to provide it within a holistic, functional, action research methodology. We are constantly in search of funding for research, program delivery and support staff to ensure that we maintain our high quality of delivery of programs so students are able to achieve their educational goals and employment aspirations that they have formerly been denied.

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